

The Humour Studies Digest

Australasian Humour Studies Network ([AHSN](#))

February 2017



Report on the 23rd Australasian Humour Studies Conference

The 23rd AHSN Conference was held 1-3 February in the historic Victorian town of Ballarat, scene of 19th century gold rushes, the Eureka Stockade conflict in defence of diggers' rights, and home to Federation University of Australia's Ballarat Campus and School of Mines (SMB). The Conference Convenor was AHSN Review Panel member, Angus McLachlan, of FUA's School of Health Sciences and Psychology. Sessions took place amid the converted historic buildings of the SMB campus downtown (the full program can be found on the AHSN website). Particular thanks not only to our indefatigable Convenor, Angus, but also to the Head of the School of Health Sciences and Psychology, Dr Dara Twomey, and to the Head of the Psychology Discipline, Professor Suzanne McLaren, both of whom provided notable support. Their encouragement and willingness to place administrative and technical resources at our Convenor's disposal certainly made his job easier.

Keynote speaker Dr Jan Sayer, Dept of English, University of Sydney, aptly illustrated the conference theme, Humour: Here and There; Then and Now, by exploring the humour integral to English medieval romances such as Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales", "Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight", and also "Troilus and Criseyde", where laughter has disturbing elements of both play and entrapment. She concluded with an account of her current research on the ironic gap between the objective and subjective self as displayed in the fifteenth-century *Prose Life of Alexander [The Great]*.

From way back then to the here and now, Convenor Angus McLachlan returned delegates to present times with an invitation to stroll the spacious streets of Ballarat in the direction of a reception kindly offered to the AHSN by the Art Gallery of Ballarat. With the good offices of Angus and another AHSN Review Panel member, Lindsay Foyle, cartoonist and cartoon historian, this included a private viewing of selections from the Gallery's fine collection of both Australian and British cartoons, including some very rare ones such as a leather-bound folio of individual broadsheet Gilray cartoons once owned by a wealthy Victorian pioneer family.

Words of Parting from Angus McLachlan:

As the Convenor of the 2017 AHSN conference, I was pleased that we had so few glitches and that both old and new attendees were able to appreciate the varied, thoughtful academic content of the presentations and the general conviviality of all AHSN members present. To hear people looking forward to next year's conference [Ed. Note: TBA shortly] and to be reminded that Ballarat is not a bad wee place were ample reward for any effort I expended in organising the conference.

THIS EDITION

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A Ballarat Gallery (Rogues and Otherwise)



At the Art Gallery of Ballarat Reception.
(Photography by Lindsay Foyle)



The reverse view (Lindsay Foyle is quick on his feet).



Wine and cheese and fine company.



The inimitable and ever energetic Dr Angus.



Loitering in the bushes.



The Curator, Julie McLaren, describing Art Gallery's collection.



A merry and engaged throng.



Maren Rawlings, who studies the psychology of humour, is introduced to rare works by Julie McLaren, Curator.



Julie McLaren, Curator, Art Gallery of Ballarat, displays some rare cartoons, both Australian and British, held in the collection.

After taking so many fine photographs, Lindsay Foyle can actually be seen in this one, adding his encyclopedic knowledge of Australian cartooning to Julie's.



29th Conference of the International Society for Humor Studies, 10-14 July 2017, University of Québec, Montréal

REGISTRATION AND SUBMISSION WEBSITE OPEN!

Please visit: <https://ishs-2017-montreal.uqam.ca/en/home/> to submit your proposals and to register.

More about the Conference from Jean-Marie LaFortune, Christelle Paré and Éliás Rizkallah, 2017 ISHS Conference Organizers:

The Université du Québec à Montréal, in collaboration with the Observatoire de l'humour, is proud to host the 2017 International Society for Humor Studies Conference from July 10 to July 14, 2017 in la belle province of Quebec, more precisely in downtown Montréal. The Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM) is a public French-language university of international influence. The quality of its programs, its research in social issues and its innovations in the creative arts are the foundation stones of its reputation.

Located in the heart of the Quartier des spectacles, an international centre for artistic creation, UQAM offers not only conferences venues of international standards, but also the opportunity to access within minutes, with a short walk, a large diversity of cultural activities, venues, shows, etc. The neighbourhood is vibrant with students, visitors, and locals, and has many restaurants and cafés for all budgets and all types of taste.

UQAM's location also provides the opportunity to easily travel throughout the city of Montréal using the public transportation system, mainly the subway (Metro). Visitors can walk through Chinatown, the Old City of Montréal, get to the Olympic Stadium or go shopping on Ste. Catherine's Street in less than 10 minutes using the Metro. And, of course, we have to mention the fact that the Canadian dollar is really low right now. This way, Montréal will be a cheaper destination for our Europeans and American colleagues that will enjoy as much fun and learning for a lower cost. Another attractive

element is the fact that the conference will be happening at the beginning of the English program of the *Just for Laughs* festival... which will be taken place just a few feet from l'UQAM! The organizing committee is already planning exciting activities with the festival's administrators.

We have negotiated two agreements with venues within a 15 minute walk distance from UQAM. We felt the need to block a number of rooms to make sure that all ISHS visitors will be able to find a room for their stay while Montreal is buzzing with activities:

Registration fees will be payable online (by credit card) through the conference website. Early registration of \$250 for ISHS members and \$300 for non-members will be possible through March 1, 2017.

We also plan to offer \$100 early registration fee for students to enable local and international graduate students to take part in the event. After March 1, the registration will be \$300, \$350, \$150 and \$175, respectively. The registration fees will include:

- The Opening cocktail (bites and one drink)
- The Closing banquet (complete buffet and two bottles of wine by table of eight)
- Coffee breaks (coffee, tea, snacks)
- The attendee "survival kit" (program, maps, references for attractions, festivals, etc.)

The summer of 2017 in Montreal will be extremely busy, fun and interesting, as the city will be celebrating its 375th anniversary. We strongly recommend that ISHS visitors and members plan their trip in advance to make sure they obtain the best deals and opportunities. To assist our members and visitors, the website, as well as the calls for papers and panels, will be launched by mid-October at the very latest. We can't wait to see you in Montreal, the "funniest city on earth" ... according to *Just for Laughs!*

Centre for Comedy Studies Research (CCSR) UPDATE

Brunel University, UK.

DECEMBER 2016 – MARCH 2017

Dear Colleagues,

We are pleased to announce that the Centre for Comedy Studies Research (CCSR) Beyond a Joke: Comedy, Identity and Offence Seminar Series continues in 2017.

In collaboration with the Magna Carta Institute and the Isambard Centre for History and Heritage, the CCSR proudly presents:

Trench Humour in World War One

Wednesday 1st February 2017 4.00pm-6.00pm

Gaskell Building, Room 239

Brunel University London

Kingston Lane

Uxbridge

Middlesex

UB8 3PH, UK

Jerry Palmer will analyse the type of humour associated with the trench warfare of World War One, a type of humour sometimes called 'black humour'. The same phrase is used in French, and in German it is called 'gallows humour'. It is a well-known feature of writings about World War One, both at the time and subsequently. We will see various examples, from all three languages. Two elements of the

theory of humour provide a basis for analysis: incongruity, and the situation of utterance; the interaction between these two in discourse-based theories of humour is well known. Arguably, the black humour of the trenches stretches the perception of incongruity to the limits of commonplace recognition, largely because the context of utterance is beyond the scope of most people's experience (then and now). The analysis focuses primarily on the question of the comprehensibility of this humour once it is taken out of the context in which it was originally made.

Jerry Palmer is the former Professor of Communications at London Metropolitan University and Visiting Professor of Sociology at City University. Originally trained in languages and literature, he is the author of 6 books on various aspects of the mass media and popular culture. Two of these are on comedy and humour: *The Logic of the Absurd* (British Film Institute, 1987) and *Taking Humour Seriously* (Routledge, 1994); he also contributed to the collection *Beyond a Joke*, edited by Sharon Lockyer and Michael Pickering (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005). He is currently preparing a book on soldiers' memoirs of World War One in Britain, France and Germany, from which this talk will be taken.

Please email Comedy.Studies@brunel.ac.uk to reserve your place.

Other upcoming Beyond a Joke: Comedy, Identity and Offence events include (full details to follow):

Say What You Like: Comedy, Religion and Offence

Sunday 19th February 2017 12.30pm-2.00pm

Peter Pizzeria, Leicester

Part of Leicester Comedy Festival

Speakers include: Christie Davies, Michael Cotter, Anshuman Mondal

Comedy, Gender and Offence

Wednesday 8th March 2017 4.15pm-6.15pm

Eastern Gateway Building, Room 003a, Brunel University London

Speakers include: Kate Fox, Andy Medhurst, Lynne Parker, Nicole Kypker, Joan Greening

We're also pleased to announce that many videos of past CCSR events are available online via the CCSR's YouTube playlist:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL0EdKd9GP9-iRzUMDWe-R_RYgHDWdba3r

And the CCSR website:

<http://www.brunel.ac.uk/research/Centres/Centre-for-Comedy-Studies-Research/Videos>

Podcasts of past CCSR events are available on the CCSR website too:

<http://www.brunel.ac.uk/research/Centres/Centre-for-Comedy-Studies-Research/Podcasts>

Don't forget you can also follow us on twitter @Comedy_Studies.

Looking forward to seeing you in 2017.

Best wishes,

Sharon

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Humours of the Past Project (HOP)

FINAL CALL FOR PAPERS

Humour, History, and Methodology: A Multidisciplinary and Trans-Professional Enquiry

Durham University – 26-28 July, 2017



The Humours of the Past (HOP) Network brings together researchers and practitioners with a mutual stake in understanding, interpreting and communicating humour of various kinds from particular times and cultural contexts. The study of humour as an approach to history – and history as an approach to humour – is a developing area of enquiry. However, there has been relatively little cross-disciplinary reflection on the methods researchers use to identify and understand humour from the past, and on what may be similar across disparate cultural materials. Furthermore, academic researchers have had only limited opportunities to discuss their modes of enquiry with practitioners who also have a professional stake in interpreting humour from the past, such as actors, directors, curators, and translators. To this end, HOP is holding a conference at Durham University, 26-28 July 2017 to encourage researchers and practitioners to share approaches. In addition to individual papers, there will be three roundtable discussions, exploring the verbal, visual and performative ‘translation’ of historical humour to contemporary audiences.

New! Keynote speakers: Em. Prof. Conal Condren (UNSW); Mr Phil Porter (playwright; works include ‘It’s a Mad World My Masters’ (RSC; 2013), ‘Vice Versa’ (RSC; 2017)); Prof. Indira Ghose (Fribourg).

We invite submissions of abstracts of not more than 300 words for 20-minute papers addressing, in their own way, the methodological issues that must be taken into account when studying humour from a particular past. Relevant topics might include:

- case studies of productive (or, unproductive) ways of identifying and/or theorising humour in a specific historical context
- the history and intellectual context of particular humour theories
- reflections on the uses and limits of particular theories of humour with respect to different historical periods
- studies of words for ‘humour’ and related phenomena in specific linguistic and temporal contexts
- the particular challenges of ‘translating’ verbal, visual, or performative humour for contemporary audiences
- historical case studies of humour censorship as a way into historical-cultural preoccupations
- the comparative value of studies of contemporary humour and comedy for considering more distant historical material.
- investigations of the traditions of longstanding ‘laughable’ tropes (as applied to race, nationality, gender etc)
- studies of historical humour from particular theoretical vantage points, e.g. history of emotions, medical humanities, or theories of cultural value/ideology
- cross-temporal and/or cross-cultural comparisons of ‘humour’ and of humour theory
- case studies of successful inter- or cross-disciplinary projects involving historical humour.

Please submit abstracts (300 words max) to humoursofthepast@gmail.com by **1 March 2017**. We particularly welcome submissions of coherent panels of 3 linked papers. For further information about the network, see: <https://humoursofthepast.wordpress.com/> and follow us on Twitter @historichumour.

Organisers:

Daniel Derrin (Durham University)

Hannah Burrows (University of Aberdeen)



Arts & Humanities
Research Council

2nd Annual Siedlce Forum for Contemporary Issues in Language and Literature (Poland)

Siedlce University of Natural Sciences and Humanities Departments of English Literature and the English Language would like to kindly invite all scholars representing different philological disciplines and theoretical models to the 2nd Annual Siedlce Forum for Contemporary Issues in Language and Literature to be held on April 28th, 2017 in Siedlce (Poland) to present their research findings (not previously published or presented) in oral sessions in English. The leitmotif of the conference is:

Humorousness/Seriousness Dichotomy in Language, Culture and Literature

Keynote Speakers:

Prof. Ewa Łuczak (University of Warsaw)

Prof. Francisco Yus (University of Alicante)

The Research Areas and Suggested Topics

Linguistics:

- Humor and gender/race/ethnicity
- Persuasion, implicature and violations of the Gricean (cooperative) model of communication
- Functions of puns, wordplay, and proverbs in second language acquisition, teaching, communication
- Stylistic figures (metaphor, irony, hyperbole, etc.)
- Jokes, cartoons and other forms of humor
- Applications of humor and laughter
- Styles of humor/humor taste
- Humor and cognition
- Humor and emotion
- Humour in film discourse, TV programmes, advertising, press

Culture Studies:

- American and/or/versus British sense of humor
- Humor in American/British sitcoms, late-night shows, physical comedies
- American utilitarian individualism: seriousness and sadness?
- The male gaze and the image of black and/or white women in film, gender, and feminist studies
- Jest, wordplay, pun, seriousness as rhetorical strategies
- The Blackface minstrelsy: fun or racism?
- The 30s and the 40s as the decades of moral seriousness in America
- The role of Shakespeare's court jesters

Literature:

- The serious nature / uses of comedy in both Adult and Children's Fiction
- Humour in prose fiction as a means of extending and crossing boundaries
- Humour as a device for exploring serious issues in literature
- The exploratory space created between humour and seriousness in Adult and Children's Fiction
- Humour in prose fiction as a means to expose and explore taboo subjects
- Humour as a necessary counterbalance in dark fantasy fiction written for children and young adults

Oral Sessions

Each presentation in the oral session will be scheduled for a 20-minute talk followed by a 10-minute discussion.

Abstract Submission

An abstract of 200-300 words (including bibliography) should be submitted by March 15th, 2017 in .doc format via e-mail to siedlceforum@gmail.com. Your abstract must be accompanied by the following information: name of the author, title of paper, affiliation, academic degree, research area, a biographical note of 60-80 words in length. Notification of acceptance will be sent to authors by March 26th, 2017.

Conference Proceedings

After the conference, papers will be published in a peer-reviewed post-conference volume. The articles need to be submitted by June 30th, 2017. Further information concerning publication as well as submission guidelines will be available on the conference website at siedlceforum.weebly.com.

Conference Fee

All participants are requested to return the registration form and pay the conference fee by March 31st, 2017. The fee, which covers organisation costs, conference materials, lunches and refreshments, is EUR 70 or PLN 300. Accommodation and transportation costs are covered by the participants. The organizers can assist in booking rooms in University halls of residence or town hotels. The fee should be transferred to one of the following bank accounts:

Institution Name:

Siedlce University of Natural Sciences and Humanities
ul. Konarskiego 2
08-110 Siedlce

Bank account for payments in EUR:

PL 84124026851978001014643201
SWIFT BIC: PKOPPLPW
Bank Pekao S.A. O/ Siedlce
Wojskowa 24, 08-110 Siedlce, Poland

Bank account for payments in PLN:

19124026851111000036563195
Bank Pekao S.A. O/ Siedlce
Wojskowa 24, 08-110 Siedlce

Conference organizing committee:

Prof. Edward Colerick
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Iwona Świątczak-Wasilewska, PhD
Vitaliy Baran, MA
Katarzyna Mroczyńska, MA
Magdalena Wieczorek, MA
Agnieszka Wróbel, MA

INVITATION AND REMINDER TO PARTICIPATE IN ON-LINE SURVEY ON HUMOUR STUDIES

Dear AHSN members,

Bruce Findlay and Jessica Milner Davis would like to invite you to take part in a cross-cultural study of an interesting new humour scale.

Our network has had a request from Zurich-based colleagues in the International Society of Humour Studies to assist with an Australasian sample of respondents. They are very keen to get a sample of about 200 participants in order to compare responses with other samples. Australians and New Zealanders are thought perhaps to differ from some other anglophone cultures and this will be an interesting test.

The survey is very short, only 12 items, plus answers on demographics like age, gender, and education. It should only take six or seven minutes to complete.

If you consider yourself to be Australasian (New Zealander or Australian), we would be very grateful if you would participate by linking to the survey on this link:

<https://de.surveymonkey.com/r/HumorAustralasian>

Thanking you in anticipation and thanking you for your support if you have already participated in the survey!

Jessica Milner Davis and Bruce Findlay

On behalf of the AHSN Review Panel

Members' New Humour Research Publications

Christine Béal and Kerry Mullan. 2016. The pragmatics of conversational humour in social visits: French and Australian English. *Language and Communication*. At:

<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S027153091630129X>

Robert Phiddian. The bitter consolation of imitation: Satire and Sense, Politics and Humour. *The Conversation*, 17 February 2017. At: <https://theconversation.com/the-bitter-consolation-of-imitation-73204>

Another AHSN Ph D

AHSN member Beatriz Carbajal Carrera, Flinders University, Adelaide, presented her doctoral research on the understanding and appreciation of humour in cartoons by non-native speakers at the University of Salamanca last June and was awarded a *Cum Laude* commendation. Following the 14th C. tradition of the University of Salamanca, this honor means that Beatriz will be able to include a *victor* emblem (see below) on the walls of the Philology building to commemorate this achievement.

Beatriz's thesis contributes to research by examining the morphology and processing of cartoons through a case-study of *Dosis Diarias*, the work of Chilean cartoonist Alberto Montt. This case-study approach was adopted in order to analyse the influence of textual configuration in Alberto Montt's cartoons on the understanding and appreciation of graphic humour, and examine the potential relationship between processing phases in graphic humour and language competence.

The results obtained in this study were positive with regards to the objectives set since they confirmed that the proposed integrated approach is a promising avenue for future research on the factors affecting success or failure to process graphic humour. Specifically, the proposed integrative model shed light on the pragmatic-discursive mechanisms that underlie graphic humour because it allows for a more systematic and comprehensive analysis of relevant factors involved in the response to humour in cartoons. Among the contributions presented by this study, the identification of the central role that caricature plays in recognising, understanding and appreciating graphic humour is highlighted. As observed in the results, caricatures have a central role in the response to graphic humour since they operate both at the structure and content levels in cartoons.

Beatriz presented her work at the 21st AHSN Conference hosted by Flinders University in 2015.



The Humour Studies Digest

The Australasian Humour Studies Network (AHSN)

'We put the "U" back into "HUMOUR"!'

Send newsletter submissions to our Co-Editors:

Michael at michael.meany@newcastle.edu.au or Jessica at Jessica.davis@sydney.edu.au

To subscribe or unsubscribe, visit the AHSN website (<http://www.sydney.edu.au/humourstudies>), click on "Subscribe to e-Newsletter" and follow the prompts to enter or remove an email address.